PITTA

Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 20 Number 4 April 2023

FIELD TRIP: Sunday, 23rd April 2023, 6.30AM: Damagundam Reserve Forest. Meeting Point: TSPA Junction (Sri Guru Raghavendra Udupi Hotel), 5.00AM. Trip Coordinator(s): Gowthama Poludasu (Mobile: 94409-10967)

Damagundam is a beautiful forested area located in the Vikarabad District of Telangana state. It is approximately 70 kilometres from Hyderabad. The area is situated at an altitude of 600 meters above sea level and is home to a variety of flora and fauna. The forest is dominated by tropical dry deciduous vegetation, with trees such as teak, rosewood, and bamboo. The forest is also home to a variety of wildlife and birds including Indian Blue Robin, Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher, Painted Spurfowl, Rock Bush Quail, etc.

This will be a half-day trip, so carry adequate water and breakfast/snacks, and protective gear if required. Strict Covid protocols will be followed, so please ensure you wear masks, carry a sanitiser and maintain social distancing. Non-members are most welcome; however, they are requested to contribute Rs. 100/- per person to the Deccan Birders kitty. Deccan Birders T-Shirts and caps will be available for sale.

Report: Birding at San Diego County, California, September 2022

Text & Photos: Aditya Rao

Anna's Hummingbird

During a recent business trip to San Diego, California, I decided to pack my binoculars and camera to chance upon any opportunity to do some birding. San Diego is in the southern part of California and on the coast of the mighty Pacific Ocean. San Diego happens to be part of the Pacific Flyway, making it a critical part of the avian migration route in the region.

In fact, San Diego has close 550+ reported birds and has the highest diversity in entire North America. It is considered a birder's paradise.

Acorn Woodpecker

Song Sparrow

Unfortunately, I had very limited opportunities given it was a business trip and could not accommodate a lot of trips as most hotspots were quite a distance away. I was of course able to spend 2 weekend mornings to walk around La Jolla cove and Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve trail, both close to my office location.

Allen's Hummingbird

Sea Lion at La Jolla Cove

Orange-crowned Warbler

California Ground Squirrel

Whilst the birding along the coastal prefectures was productive, birding in a dry and difficult scrub forests of San Diego is much harder. Also, peak summer times likely did not help. Nevertheless, I was able to document close to 25+ birds and hope to visit many more hotspots in San Diego County when the opportunity presents itself again.

The list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	14	Acorn Woodpecker	*Melanerpes formicivorus*
2	Mourning Dove	*Zenaida macroura*	15	Olive-sided Flycatcher	*Contopus cooperi*
3	Anna's Hummingbird	*Calypte anna*	16	Black Phoebe	*Sayornis nigricans*
4	Allen's Hummingbird	*Selasphorus sasin*	17	California Scrub Jay	*Aphelocoma californica*
5	Heermann's Gull	*Larus heermanni*	18	American Crow	*Corvus brachyrhynchos*
6	Western Gull	*Larus occidentalis*	19	American Bushtit	*Psaltriparus minimus*
7	Brandt's Cormorant	*Urile penicillatus*	20	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
8	Double-crested Cormorant	*Nannopterum auritum*	21	House Finch	*Haemorhous mexicanus*
9	Brown Pelican	*Pelecanus occidentalis*	22	Song Sparrow	*Melospiza melodia*
10	Snowy Egret	*Egretta thula*	23	California Towhee	*Melozone crissalis*
11	Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	24	Red-winged Blackbird	*Agelaius phoeniceus*
12	Cooper's Hawk	*Accipiter cooperii*	25	Orange-crowned Warbler	*Leiothlypis celata*
13	Red-shouldered Hawk	*Buteo lineatus*			

Some other photos taken during the trip :

Cottontail

California Towhee

Anna's Hummingbird

Double-crested Cormorant

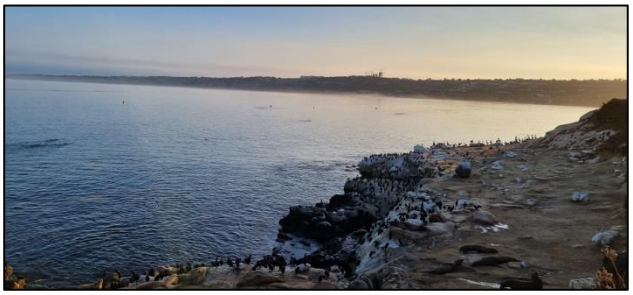
Olive-sided Flycatcher

Brown Pelican (breeding & non-breeding plumages)

Heermann's Gull

Western Gull adult

Western Gull juvenile/first-winter



La Jolla Cove, where thousands of Cormorants, Gulls & Sea Lions can be found at one spot

La Jolla Trail

California Scrub Jay

American Bushtit

California Towhee

Song Sparrow

House Sparrow

Osprey

Black Phoebe

Mourning Dove

House Finch (male)

American Crow

Brandt's Cormorant

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BIRDS OF THE SAME FEATHER, FLOCK TOGETHER

Report: 35th Maharashtra Pakshimitra Sammelan, Chandrapur, Maharashtra, March 11-13, 2023

Text & Photos: Dhiraj & Vijaya Kaveri

The authors at the conference venue

Our exploration of birds and wildlife had gathered pace, and here we were, at the 35th Maharashtra Pakshimitra Sammelan – literally meaning Friends of Birds Conference – 0rganized by Maharashtra Pakshimitra, one of the oldest organizations of bird lovers of Maharashtra. The local host was Eco Pro Organization, an NGO working in the field of Environment & Social Sector in Chandrapur, and the venue was the Forest Academy, also known as Rangers College, managed by the Maharashtra Forest Department.

The theme for this year was conservation of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and the vulnerable Sarus Crane. There were presentations from senior ornithologists, researchers and conservationists working for the conservation of these 2 bird species and their habitats.

It was a great learning experience for us, though we also felt sad about the depleting numbers of these two wonderful birds – less than 150 GIB and 15,000-20,000 Sarus Crane. So it was quite encouraging to see the conservation efforts of Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, who have been working on captive breeding of the GIB with some significant success.

Black-hooded Oriole

We got to know and meet so many fellow delegates from all over Maharashtra who have common interest in Birds and Wildlife. We also had a wonderful Bird Walk in the Forest Academy campus, where we spotted some good bird species like Green Imperial Pigeon, Greater Flameback, Black-hooded Oriole, Spotted Owlet, Shikra, Indian Grey Hornbill, Alexandrine, Rose-ringed and Plum-headed Parakeets, Rufous Treepie etc.

Green Imperial Pigeon

Spotted Owlet

Alexandrine Parakeet

On March 13, 2023, the organizers took us to Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve for a Canter Safari. While the focus was on wildlife, we did get to see some interesting birds like Mottled Wood Owl, Indian Roller, White-throated and Pied Kingfishers, Lesser Whistling-ducks, Red-naped and Black-headed Ibises, Asian Openbill and Indian Peafowl in their best mood.

White-throated Kingfisher

Mottled Wood Owl

It was good to be a part of a congregation of around 200 bird lovers, talking, listening and observing only birds. This renews our interest and hope that there are more people around who care about, and are working for conservation of, our feathered friends.

Indian Peafowl male displaying

I wish we too could have a similar event in Hyderabad in the near future!

Rosy Starling

Chestnut-shouldered Petronia

The full list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Laughing Dove	*Streptopelia senegalensis*	21	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*
2	Green Imperial Pigeon	*Ducula aenea*	22	Rufous Treepie	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*
3	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	*Treron phoenicopterus*	23	Booted Warbler	*Iduna caligata*
4	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	24	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*
5	Shikra	*Accipiter badius*	25	Yellow-eyed Babbler	*Chrysomma sinense*
6	Spotted Owlet	*Athene brama*	26	Brahminy Starling	*Sturnia pagodarum*
7	Indian Grey Hornbill	*Ocyceros birostris*	27	Chestnut-tailed Starling	*Sturnia malabarica*
8	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	28	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*
9	Indian Roller	*Coracias benghalensis*	29	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*
10	Coppersmith Barbet	*Psilopogon haemacephalus*	30	Purple Sunbird	*Cinnyris asiaticus*
11	Greater Flameback	*Chrysocolaptes lucidus*	31	Lesser Whistling-duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*
12	Black-rumped Flameback	*Dinopium benghalense*	32	Mottled Wood Owl	*Strix ocellata*
13	Alexandrine Parakeet	*Psittacula eupatria*	33	Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*
14	Plum-headed Parakeet	*Psittacula cyanocephala*	34	Red-naped Ibis	*Pseudibis papillosa*
15	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	35	Black-headed Ibis	*Threskiornis melanocephalus*
16	Indian Golden Oriole	*Oriolus kundoo*	36	Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*
17	Black-hooded Oriole	*Oriolus xanthornus*	37	Indian Peafowl	*Pavo cristatus*
18	Common Iora	*Aegithina tiphia*	38	Rosy Starling	*Pastor roseus*
19	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*	39	Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	*Gymnoris xanthocollis*
20	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*			

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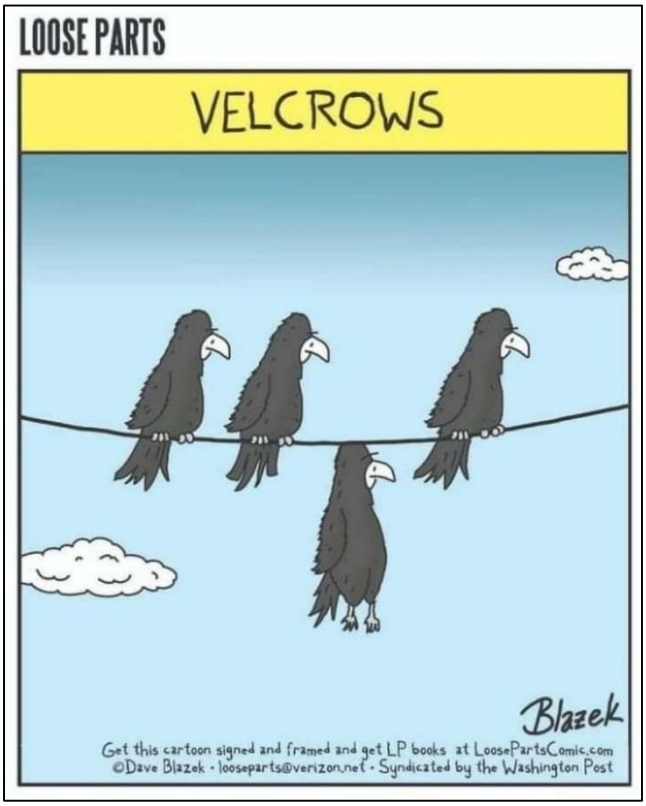
Bird Humour

Umesh Mani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(From Facebook, August 19, 2022)

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Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*)

Temminck's Stint (Chennai, March 21, 2021)

Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Scolopacidae
Genus: *Calidris*
Species: *C. temminckii*
Size: 13-15 cm

Description & distribution: The Temminck's Stint is a small-sized wader that breeds in the arctic regions of Europe and Asia, from Scandinavia east through north-western Russia and northern Siberia, and occasionally in Scotland. It is a long-distance migrant, wintering at freshwater locations in the Mediterranean, northern tropical Africa, the Middle-east, the Indian subcontinent, and Indochina and parts of South East Asia, including southern China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Borneo and sometimes Philippines. The genus name comes from the Ancient Greek *kalidris* (or *skalidris*), which was a term used by Aristotle to describe some grey waterside birds, and species name commemorates the Dutch naturalist Coenraad Jacob Temminck.

In its non-breeding plumage, it is a drab-looking bird, with mainly plain grey-brown head and upperparts, and whitish underparts with a greyish-brown breast showing heavy brown streaking. Bill is short and dark, with a pale base to the lower mandible. Legs are yellowish or olive green – it is one of the two stints with greenish legs seen in India (the other being Long-toed). Breeding birds show more rufous mantle and scapular feathers with dark centres and grey tips. The tail is long, with white outer retrices and dark central feathers. Sexes are alike.

Habitat & behaviour: The Temminck's Stint is generally seen singly or in small groups, usually along with other small waders like Sand Plovers, Ringed Plovers, Sandpipers etc. It frequents coastal waters as well as inland freshwater habitats like irrigated fields, lakes, ponds, paddyfields, lagoons, tidal creeks, estuaries, marshes, intertidal mudflats and salt pans. When startled, it tends to take flight straight up like a snipe. It forages by mouse-like movements, picking up insects and their larvae, annelids, crustaceans and mollusks and, occasionally, plant matter, from the surface of the mud – it does not usually probe the mud with its bill. It usually calls during flight, uttering a sharp, rapid stuttering *tirrr*, often repeated, or a more prolonged *tirrr-r-r*. During displays, a rhythmic, rising and falling *kililili* or *sirrrrrr* can be heard.

Nesting: The Temminck's Stint breeds generally between May and July in most of its breeding range. The typical nest is usually a shallow cup-shaped scrape on the ground. The usual clutch consists of 3-4 eggs, off-white or buffish stone coloured, spotted and blotched with reddish brown. Breeding involves bigamy by both male and female, with the female usually laying a second clutch of eggs; however, both (separately) incubate one clutch only.

Local name: The Temminck's Stint is known as *'Chhota panlowwa'* in Hindi and Marathi (a name it shares with the Little Stint), *'Manjakaal kosu ullan'* in Tamil and *'Ujalapag khichdiyo'* in Gujarati.

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